

# PHANTOM FIREWORKS

Distributors of Phantom® and Wolf Pack® Brand Fireworks

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Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Public Safety and Security Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3600  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Raised Senate Bill No. 132

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Chairwomen Osten and Horn, and members of the Public Safety Committee, my name is Danial Peart, Director of Government Affairs for Phantom Fireworks. Thank you for the opportunity to present our comments on Senate Bill No. 132, *An Act Concerning the Sale and Use of Consumer Grade Fireworks*.

Since 1996, consumer fireworks use has nearly tripled, accounting for more than 300 million pounds of fireworks used each year<sup>1</sup>. During the same period, fireworks-related injuries have decreased by nearly 70%<sup>2</sup>. The unparalleled success of the fireworks industry's safety record has been achieved through an industry-led effort to mandate a high-quality product, and a vigorous education campaign to ensure that consumers are aware of how to responsibly use consumer fireworks.

Since the year 2000 at least 18 states have expanded their laws that address the sale and use of consumer fireworks. Notable among those are New York, New Jersey, and Delaware which were previously termed as "zero tolerance states" where not so much as a common sparkler was permitted to be sold or used. Now, the consumer fireworks laws in those states have eclipsed what is permitted here in Connecticut. In the 19 years that I have been in the fireworks business, not a single state that we operate in has reversed or repealed their consumer fireworks laws. A strong safety record and recapturing lost revenue have been the driving factors for this.

Given the recent history of states that have embraced consumer fireworks legalization, now is the perfect time for Connecticut to consider the full legalization of consumer fireworks sales and use. Recapturing the market of your own residents that are currently traveling to other states to get their fireworks, while also taking advantage of the significant neighboring populations would most certainly lead to a positive fiscal impact for the state. A point that I'm sure many of you are already aware of, there are already plenty of fireworks-loving Connecticut residents that visit fireworks stores in New Hampshire and Pennsylvania each year.

While we are happy to support SB 132, we hope for the opportunity to engage the sponsors and committee on several, small, amendments that would bring greater clarity to everyone involved. Nothing of great substance, but we should add the commonly used definitions for consumer fireworks that are already incorporated by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This will more accurately define the new fireworks being sold, and eliminate a conflict that currently exists in the bill.

Also, eliminating reloadable mortar shells and rockets from the definition of consumer fireworks would put Connecticut retailers at a clear disadvantage from fireworks retailers in other states, while also limiting the amount of taxes to be collected from fireworks enthusiasts who are already traveling to these states to make their legal purchases.

Phantom Fireworks supports SB 132 and we urge you to do the same. We would welcome the opportunity to work on several, small, amendments that would provide much needed clarity to both the fireworks industry as well as enforcement officials, and modernize Connecticut's fireworks law to represent the real-world scenario much of the country has already realized. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Danial P. Peart